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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 003861

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: FATA AND NWFP: WEEKLY INCIDENTS OF TALIBANIZATION,
DECEMBER 1 - DECEMBER 4

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 3809

[1](#)B. PESHAWAR 0527

Classified By: Ambassador Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4(B),(D).

Introduction:

[1](#)1. (SBU) Fighting continued in Bajaur into the first week of December with government forces reporting small advances, claiming to kill over 50 militants, but unable to fully secure the volatile agency. Troops reportedly began patrolling areas captured from militants in Nawagai tehsil. Security forces announced that residents displaced by the military operation could return to their homes, but with a continuation of fighting and winter beginning, it remains unclear if many will go back to Bajaur now.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The beginning of December saw a continuation of the same trend that according to widespread reporting made November the most violent month of 2008 in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), with a surge in lawlessness, militant attacks throughout the region, the killing of a U.S. contractor and his local driver, kidnappings, and several rocket attacks in Peshawar. (Note. Refs A and B report further on the deteriorating security situation and challenges facing a demoralized police force. End Note).

[1](#)3. (SBU) Following the Mumbai attacks, several militant groups issued statements to the press, pledging to fight alongside the country's armed forces in case of Indian aggression against Pakistan.

Bajaur

[1](#)4. (U) The following is a summary of events in Bajaur Agency, where the Government of Pakistan launched military operations in August:

December 1: Fighter jets bombed militant positions in Mamoond tehsil, reportedly killing up to 15 militants and wounding four. Local media reports indicated that several families were leaving Mamoond to escape the fighting. Relief organizations report small numbers of IDPs leaving to stay with relatives near Peshawar.

December 1: Bajaur IDPs in the Kachi Ghari camp protested the conditions of the camp, complaining that camp administrators and the NWFP government were indifferent to their plight.

December 2: Pakistani troops reportedly targeted Kosar, Bai Cheena, Jannat Shah and Charmang areas of Khar tehsil with artillery, reportedly killing six militants. The government reported that troops continued to advance into various areas of Khar and Nawagai, which were earlier under militant control.

December 3: Security forces reportedly killed up to 30 militants in airstrikes. Reports indicate that troops backed by tanks and armored personnel carriers secured Nawagai town, some 30 km northwest of Khar, near the Afghan border. Militants reportedly did not put up resistance and forces captured the town.

NWFP

15. (C) There was a particularly brutal incident in Mingora, Swat, during the reporting period. On November 25, militants murdered a female member of a local NGO in Mingora and mutilated her face after killing her. Most press reports concluded the murder was in response to criticism she made against the taliban on 20 November. Consulate contacts said that the militants ignored pleas from neighbors, from behind closed doors, to stop. The murder and desecration of her body took up to 10-15 minutes, with militants chanting slogans and warning locals that the same would happen to all those who worked in anti-Islamic professions and did not adhere to the taliban's program. Consulate contacts said the murder reinforced the fear of people in

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Mingora that militants would target local staff for their association with U.S. programs. (Note: Although the woman was not linked to the U.S mission, contacts opined that those who speak out against the taliban are perceived to be associated with U.S. programs. End note.)

16. (SBU) The following incidents occurred in the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) and settled areas of NWFP:

December 1, Swat: A suicide car-bomber reportedly killed nine people, including three school-children, while attacking a military checkpoint. Elsewhere, a civilian was killed and two security personnel injured in a gun battle between troops and militants in Manglor area. In Kabal tehsil, people returned home after security forces completed an operation against militants.

December 1, Peshawar: Militants fired three rockets at a terminal in Peshawar, killing two persons and burning to ashes 12 trucks loaded with goods for NATO forces. The trucks were parked at a terminal on the outskirts of Peshawar at Ring Road. (See ref. B)

December 1, Lakki Marwat: Local militants reportedly fired rockets at a police vehicle near the agency headquarters, killing three policemen and injuring five others.

December 1, Bannu: Three policemen and three militants were killed and 12 others injured after militants attacked a security checkpoint. A spokesman for the taliban in North Waziristan claimed responsibility for the attack to the press.

December 3, Mohmand: A suicide bomber reportedly blew himself up close to a security patrol vehicle. Numerous press reports described the bomber as riding a donkey cart and jumping off towards the police vehicle, but falling on the road and blowing himself up short of his target.

December 3, Charsadda: A suicide bomber reportedly drove an explosives-laden car into a security convoy, killing three security personnel and two civilians, while wounding six security force personnel and four civilians.

December 4, Swat: Security forces reportedly killed ten militants in Malam Jabba and Matta tehsil, while seven civilians died. In Mingora, unidentified assailants killed Shamim Khan, Upper Dir

district senior vice president of the Awami National Party (ANP).
(Note. Khan was active in establishing a Lashkar to flush out militants from the region. End note.) Taliban local commander Hafizullah reportedly claimed responsibility for Khan's assassination.

December 4, Peshawar: A deputy superintendent of police survived a reported assassination attempt.

December 4, Bannu: Militants fired rockets at a police station, killing one policeman and injuring three others.

FATA

16. (U) The following is a roundup of incidents of Talibanization in the FATA and Frontier Regions:

December 1, North Waziristan: Local taliban and other tribesmen reportedly offered to stop their actions against security forces and to support the government if fighting with India were to begin. A Lashkar-i-Islam spokesman and tribesmen from North Waziristan vowed to reporters that if the ongoing operation against militants was stopped, they would fight India alongside the Pakistan army. Elsewhere, militants shot a 35-year-old Afghan man, accusing him of spying for the U.S.

December 1, Mohmand: Security forces imposed a five hour curfew. Press reported that the curfew led to the death of a pregnant woman

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when security forces would not allow her vehicle to pass en route to Peshawar hospital.

December 2, Khyber: At least three people were injured when a remote-controlled bomb targeting a truck carrying supplies for U.S. forces in Afghanistan exploded at the Machni checkpoint in Landi Kotal. The injured were residents of Shakiwal area in Khyber Agency. (See Ref. B) Elsewhere, unidentified gunmen reportedly abducted three men from Landi Kotal bazaar and Jamrud, in separate incidents.

December 3, Mohmand: A suicide bomber reportedly killed four people when he drove his car into a Frontier Corps convoy.

December 4, South Waziristan: Press widely reported that a local taliban commander under Baitullah Mehsud, Maulana Azmatullah, was among three injured in a roadside bomb blast in Chagmali area.

December 4, Khyber: Unidentified armed men kidnapped a foreign NGO's project manager and his driver. The men were abducted in Takhta Baig while conducting a survey. Earlier in the day, a Jamrud Elementary College principal and two doctors were also kidnapped.

December 4, Lower Dir: Unidentified men reportedly detonated three bombs planted close to video and CD shops at Al-Noor and China markets near Timergara. The blasts damaged several video and CD shops, however no casualties were reported.

Government Response

17. (U) This is a summary of government responses to "creeping Talibanization" according to press and consulate contacts:

December 1, Bajaur: The Levies force reportedly defused a rocket three km from Khar.

Grass Roots Efforts to Halt Talibanization

18. (U) The following events are examples of activities taken by local communities:

December 1, Swat: In Mingora, a peace conference reportedly asked the government to implement shari'a law in Malakand to help restore peace.

December 3, Lower Dir: A local jirga reportedly met with militants operating in Maidan and told them to leave the area in accordance with the political administration's message. Reports indicate that local fears of a military operation are growing because militants refuse to vacate the area.

December 4, Peshawar: A representative Jirga of Tarakazai, Hazeemzai, Qasim Khel, Dadu Khel and Barankhel tribes reportedly agreed with the government to hand over 37 suspected militants operating in their areas and wanted by political authorities in Peshawar by December 20.

Comment:

19. (C) Consulate contacts conveyed concerns that police presence was inadequate throughout the region and police morale was low. The murder of the female NGO worker in Swat, where police failed to help her or to pursue her killers, reinforced this sense. Police, who are often front-line targets for militants, are reportedly spread too thin and outgunned by militants. These contacts described the police as "hunkered down" at checkpoints and police stations, often unwilling to confront suspicious activity in their immediate area and refusing to patrol, especially at night.

PATTERSON